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Training School, Tientsin

2. In July the first class graduated ahead of schedule from the AFO training school at Tientsin, officially designated as the First Armored Troops Training School of the Chinese Communist Army.² Its 1,100 cadres were returned to the units from which they had been transferred for training or were assigned to new units as subordinate-grade cadres. In August, training began for the second class of 700 students, 70 per cent of whom were subordinate-grade infantry cadres, while the remainder included students from middle schools, technical colleges, or universities, and a few educated factory workers. All were members of the Chinese Communist Party or Youth Corps.
3. The student body was divided into four battalions, each battalion into three companies, and each company into three platoons. There was also one communications company. One military police company from the tank division stationed at Tientsin was garrisoned at the school and performed patrol duties.
4. As of early November the school was equipped with six Soviet-made training tanks, five Japanese 7½-ton tanks, three 15-ton tanks, two Soviet-made T-34 tanks, and one armored car.
5. Soviet advisers and instructors lectured and supervised the training program, which was based on that of the USSR. Administrative personnel, including the political commissar, were all Chinese.
6. The training program was designed to give full training to all students so that a graduate could perform any of the duties of a tank crew. Students received six months of preliminary training consisting of basic infantry training, political training, and cultural education. The training program was divided into three major steps as follows:
 - a. Individual instruction:
 - (1). Driving: Students were taught first to perform all driving operations while seated in a model driver's seat. Then, seated in a real tank, the student manipulated the controls and thus moved a model tank, which was about two meters long and electrically connected to the controls of the real tank, over a terrain board containing bomb craters, mountains, trenches, anti-tank obstacles, and barbed wire. In the final stages, the student drove tractors and then tanks, and practiced installing and removing spare parts.
 - (2). Gunnery training: Practice in aiming was given on machine guns, using triangular targets, and on tank guns, making use of the short-length focus method. For this method, an ordinary gun was adapted by fixing a small electric light at the end of the barrel and a double-convex lens at the muzzle. The electric light was so placed on the focus of the lens that parallel rays of light were emitted. After aiming, the student stepped on the releasing pedal, rays of light were emitted, and the position of the focus determined the accuracy of the aim. This gun was used with both fixed and moving targets. For firing practice, 7.9 mm light machine guns and the Soviet-made 37mm instruction gun were used.

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(3). Grenade throwing: To develop arm strength and speed in throwing, dummy grenades were used at first. Then real "cucumber" grenades and grenades with wooden handles were used, both types being manufactured by the Taiyuan Arsenal.

(4). Communications training: Training in light signalling and flag signalling was given, and separate teams were organized for radio and radiophone training.

b. Group instruction: Group or formation training utilized two-wheeled miniature tanks, six-wheeled miniature tanks, and three-wheeled medium-sized tanks; company-size instruction was given on more than ten large and small tanks. Firing practice was then held by platoon-size and company-size units.

c. Combat training:

(1). Marching, including long distance marches by day and night marches.

(2). Individual combat practice.³

(3). Joint armored-infantry combat exercises.

(4). Joint armored force-artillery combat exercises.

(5). Joint armored force-air force combat exercises.

(6). Anti-air raid precautions during marches.

(7). Anti-air raid precautions during bivouac.

(8). Joint armored force-cavalry combat exercises.

7. Between July and October, AFC continually received modern Soviet equipment and was reorganized extensively.⁴ The following new units were formed:

a. The 5 Tank Division was placed under the command of the Southwest China Military Area, and stationed at Kuanghsu (104-17, 30-99). It consisted of two tank regiments, one motorized artillery battalion, one motorized infantry battalion, and auxiliary units.

b. The 3 Independent Tank Regiment was placed under the command of the Northwest China Military Area and stationed at Sian (108-34, 34-16). It consisted of five tank companies, one motorized artillery company, and one motorized infantry company.

c. The 4 Independent Tank Regiment was placed under the command of the Central and South China Military Area and stationed at Loyang (112-26, 34-40). It consisted of four tank companies, two motorized artillery companies, and two motorized infantry companies.

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- 25X1A 1. [REDACTED] Comment. [REDACTED] from the same source, reported as of May 1951 only one AFC training base at Ch'anghsintien and one Chinese Communist tank school in Tientsin. Training centers at Ssui'ingchieh, Yungchi, and Hsuehou were listed among those established especially for short-term training of specific tank units.
- 25X1A 2. [REDACTED] Comment. [REDACTED] reported the training period at the Tientsin school to be three years.
- 25X1A 3. [REDACTED] Comment. Probably individual tank combat exercises in which one tank attacks another.
- 25X1A 4. [REDACTED] Comment. [REDACTED] reported that by mid-April 1951, AFC had organized three tank divisions and one independent tank regiment, and that one additional tank division and one independent tank regiment were in the process of formation. According to other information available to this office, by mid-August the AFC consisted of three tank divisions and four independent tank regiments.

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